

# Montana and the Sky

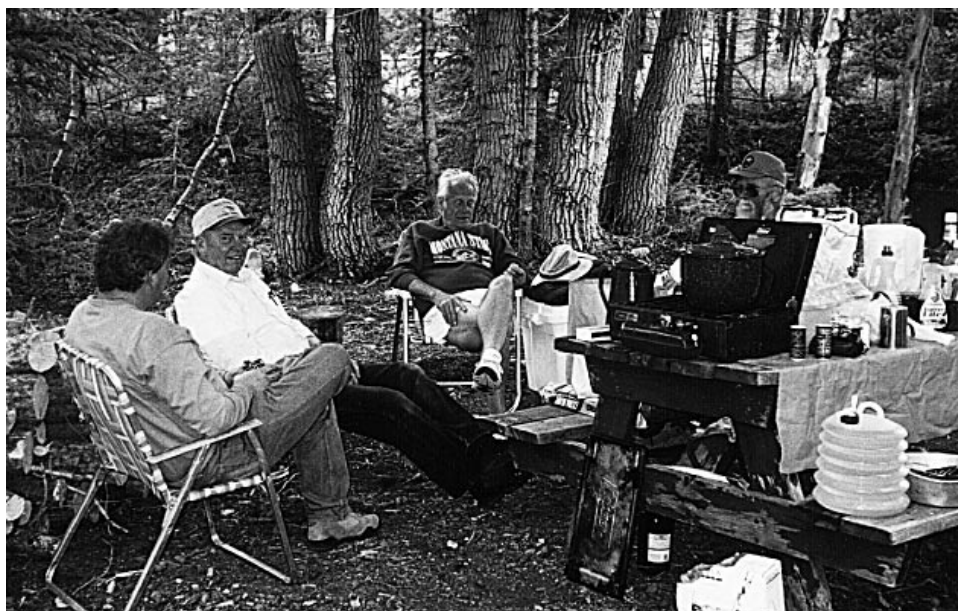


Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division

Vol. 48 No. 7

July 1997

## Benchmark Annual Work Session



*Lanny Hanson of Glasgow, Bill Sheets of Big Sandy, Charlie Clark of Denver, and Bob Lipscomb “take five” and enjoy the gorgeous surroundings offered by the area*

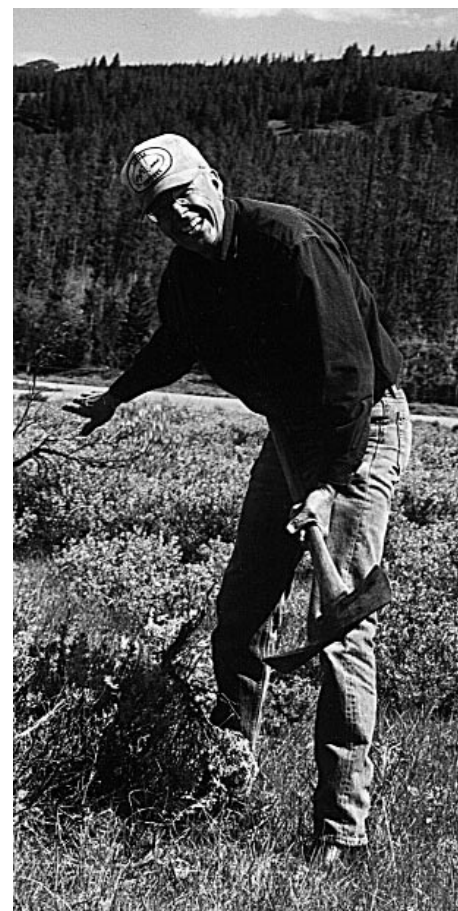
A small, but hearty crew of volunteers (made up of Montana pilots and friends) gathered May 30 and 31 to perform annual maintenance at the Benchmark Airfield, 30 miles west of Augusta in the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Benchmark was constructed in 1966 through a joint venture between the Montana Aeronautics Commission, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and the FAA. The airfield boasts paved tiedown areas and a paved runway (6,000' x 100'), and is owned by the USFS.

The campground at the airfield has been improved during work sessions over the past years by volunteers and in cooperation with the Montana Aeronautics Division.

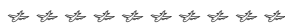
The Division wishes to thank those folks who continue to support its efforts and participate in the annual work sessions held to maintain and preserve the backcountry airstrips remaining in Montana. ✈

*Below, Larry Larson of Molt participates in the sage brush removal that took place during the work session. Larry and his daughter were on hand to assist with the annual maintenance.*



# Administrator's Column

**Chit Chat Radio Frequency:** During the past two or three years I have received many complaints from pilots and unicom operators throughout the state regarding misuse of the unicom frequency 122.8. Many pilots are using this frequency for air-to-air chit chat and jamming the airport unicom preventing them from being used for their intended purpose of providing airport advisory information to pilots. Much of the reported misuse occurs at night and there have been instances where such misuse has turned on the pilot-controlled runway lights. To my great surprise it is suspected that much of this misuse is coming from professional pilots, not from inexperienced private pilots. I have become more observant while flying throughout the state and have found that these complaints are justifiable. I have noted another frequency, 122.9 is also being misused for air-to-air chit chat. This frequency is to be used for transmitting in-the-blind at non-unicom airports such as mountain airstrips to advise other aircraft of your intentions and to receive the same information and possibly airport conditions from other aircraft. So on behalf of the airport unicom operators, and for obvious flight safety reasons, I ask that you use the proper air-to-air frequency of 122.75 for your chit chat.



**Aviation Excise Taxes to Continue:** Both the U.S. House and Senate approved a 10-year continuation of the aviation excise taxes in separate budget reconciliation bills. The House version keeps the aviation fuel taxes at present levels and reduces the airline passenger ticket tax from 10 to 7.5 percent and assesses passengers up to \$3 per flight segment. The international departure and arrival fee would increase to \$15.50 per passenger. The Senate version would keep both the aviation fuel and ticket taxes at current levels and assess an \$8 international departure and arrival fee. While the aviation users, except for the "big seven" airlines, will be pleased with this action, the National Civil Aviation Review Commission (NCARC) is clearly

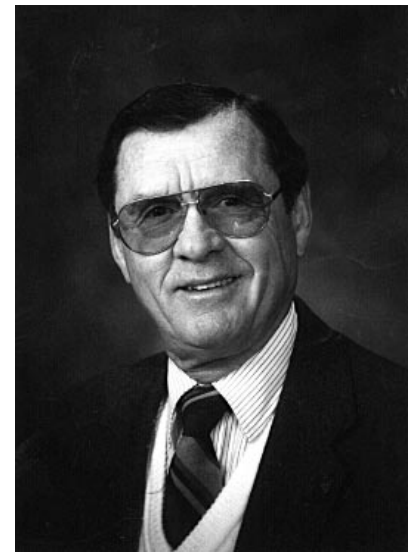
upset criticizing the tax proposals, stating "it is extraordinarily clear that the steps taken by the congressional tax writing committees over the past two weeks will make it extremely difficult to make the necessary changes in the aviation financing system. Congress appears to be poised to dramatically increase taxes on airline passengers in order to accomplish other changes in tax policy, without assuring that the revenue raised will be dedicated to safety and capacity improvements, which are critically needed." It looks to me that the domestic airline passengers will see a decrease—not an increase in taxes as claimed by NCARC. I can't understand how NCARC figures this when the proposals either keep the taxes as they are now or lowers them. Am I missing something?



**President's User Fee Plan Rejected:** The U.S. House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee rejected President Clinton's request to collect up to \$300 million in new, unspecified user fees and his plan to cut the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to \$1 billion. Instead the Committee approved a \$1.7 billion budget for the AIP and a total budget for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in fiscal year 1998. Committee Chairman Frank Wolf (VA) told the Administration that it would be "premature" and "a serious mistake" to include user fees in the fiscal 1998 budget proposal and questioned the safety implications of a user fee system to fund the FAA. Wolf said that "we have given the FAA the financial resources it needs to do the job with regard to aviation safety. Now they have to get the people over there to carry this out."



**Gratitude:** I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who extended your expressions of condolences upon learning of my Father's unexpected death. I want you to know how comforting this was during a time of deep sorrow. Thank you.



*Montana and the Sky*  
Department of Transportation  
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Official monthly publication  
of the

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2630 Airport Road  
Helena, Montana 59604

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*Montana and the Sky* is published monthly  
in the interest of aviation in the  
State of Montana.  
Third Class postage paid at  
Helena, Montana 59604

Subscription: \$5 per year  
Editor: Debbie Alke  
Editorial Assistance:  
Q Communications Group

# Internet CFI Directory Established

People interested in finding a professional certified flight instructor (CFI) now have 24-hours-a-day access to such a listing through the National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI).

The NAFI World Wide Web directory ([www.nafinet.org](http://www.nafinet.org)) includes a wide range of information, including CFI names, hometowns and contact telephone numbers. The directory is organized according to state and includes international listings. All CFIs listed are NAFI members and agree to abide by NAFI's code of ethics and standards for flight instructors.

NAFI was founded in 1967 and is dedicated to raising and maintaining the professional standing of flight instructors throughout the nation, as well as providing a safe and effective learning situation for students. In addition, NAFI initiates education and support programs throughout the aviation industry. The organization affiliated with EAA in May 1995. Additional NAFI information is available on the World Wide Web ([www.nafinet.org](http://www.nafinet.org)). ✈

## BigSky Airlines to Improve Service

Air services linking central and eastern Montana communities with the regional hub of Billings will improve effective October 1. The number of flights provided by BigSky Airlines will increase from 10 round trips per city each week to 12 round trips per week. Cities affected are Lewistown, Havre, Glasgow, Wolf Point, Sidney, Glendive and Miles City.

A full pattern of service will be resumed on Tuesdays and weekends. Nonstop service on some flights between Sidney and Billings and an early morning flight from Glendive to Billings will be resumed. In addition, effective October 1, all flights will be operated with larger, newer 19-passenger Fairchild Metro III aircraft.

Services to the above communities were reduced on short notice in November 1995, as a result of decreased federal budget appropriations for EAS. Services have remained in a reduced state since that time. Service levels effective October 1 will restore flight frequency in effect before the reductions were made and will increase available seats by approximately one-fourth.

BigSky Airlines has provided essential air services to seven communities in Montana, under DOT contract, on a continuous basis since mid-1980. ✈

## Airport Receives Award

The staff of Logan International Airport recently received a "Balchen/Post Award," Special Mention in the Medium Commercial Airport Category at the 31st Annual International Aviation Snow Symposium sponsored by the American Association of Airport Executives.

The award recognizes excellence in the performance of airport snow and ice control by airports in the United States and Canada during the winter of 1996-97.

This is the second time the Billings airport has earned the award. It was also honored for the winter of 1978-79. The airport recorded about 105 inches of snow this past winter, almost twice the normal snowfall.

Congratulations on a job well done! ✈

## Calendar

**July 9-13**—Northwest EAA Fly-in, Arlington, WA. Call 360/435-5857.

**July 11-13**—Supercub Fly-in at Moose Creek. Call Lon Habersetzer 360/687-3640.

**July 12**—Hamilton Airport Open House and Pancake Breakfast. Contact Warren Woolley 406/363-0874.

**July 12**—North Central Hangar Fly-in Breakfast and Toy Show, Havre.

**July 12-13**—Missoula Air Show, fly-ins welcome; display aircraft free; call Paul Klawitter 406/728-4381.

**July 18-20**—Schafer Meadows Annual Work Session.

**July 25-27**—Northwest Mountain Family Fly-in and Aviation Safety Convention, Driggs, ID.

**July 26**—New runway dedication, 10 am, Big Timber airport.

**July 30-August 5**—45th Annual EAA Fly-in Convention, Oshkosh, WI

**August 2**—Stevensville Airport Awareness Day. Contact Lynnet Thomas at 406/777-3041.

**August 2-3**—IAA Fly-in at Johnson Creek. Call Dennis Colson 208/378-4181.

**August 7-10**—MAAA Annual Fly-in, Three Forks Airport/Progreba Field.

**August 13-16**—Sky Trail International Northwest Aviation Council Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

**August 15-17**—Fourth Annual Splash-in/Fly-in, Lower Stillwater Lake. Call Bill Montgomery 360/629-6100 or 406/881-2236.

**August 17**—Second annual Powell Valley Wheels Aircraft/Car Show, Powell Municipal Airport, 7 am-4 pm, Powell, WY.

**August 30-September 1**—Annual Labor Day Fly-in, West Yellowstone.

**September 7-14**—Reno Air Races, Reno, NV.

**September 10-11**—Western International Search and Rescue Advisory Committee (WISARAC) Annual Meeting, Kalispell.

**September 12-14**—Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Kalispell.

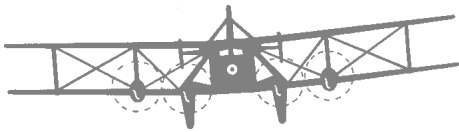
**September 13**—Aerotronics Annual Open House, Billings.

# Montana Antique Air Tour

Montana Antique Airplane Association (MAAA) members Lanny Hanson and Roy Hollandsworth co-chaired this year's air tour. Lanny and Roy were assisted by Karen Hollandsworth who served as the tour guide, secretary/treasurer and "den mother" to all!

More than 30 antique, classic and modern aircraft arrived in Havre to begin the 869-mile adventure. The MAAA Board of Directors meeting was conducted in Charlie Inman's hangar in Havre.

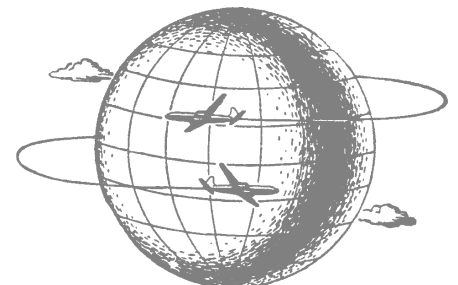
Thursday morning the group traveled to Jordan for coffee and on to Glendive for lunch before stopping for the night in Beach, ND, where the group was bussed to Medora, ND, for a nighttime variety show at an outdoor amphitheatre.



Friday morning the antiquers were bussed back to Beach and the aircraft departed for Minot with a fuel stop at the Flying S Ranch. Lunch was served in the International Peace Park and followed by a tour of the beautiful park. Evening was spent in Minot and ended with a tour of the EAA Museum and barbecue.

The group departed Minot for Williston and a coffee stop and then were served lunch at Wolf Point before departing for Glasgow, the ending point for the air tour.

Thanks, Lanny, Roy and Karen for a great tour! And to all those folks along the way who participated in hosting and welcoming the Montana Antique Airplane Association.



# Emergency Locator Transmitter Basics

By: Brian A. Holmes, Chief Pilot, *Washington Aeronautics Division*

Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs) have been around the aviation community since the early 1970s. Unfortunately they have had a checkered past and some serious problems along the way. In 1974 Congress mandated most aircraft operating within the U.S. had to have an ELT installed. Pilots and alphabet groups resisted but Federal law mandated the installation.

Early models were powered by lithium batteries. In the late 1970s, after a series of ELTs exploded an emergency notice was issued to remove the lithium batteries from the aircraft. Once the battery problem was solved (most now use nicad) ELTs were armed again. Until this decade ELTs remained almost unchanged.

There are still some problems with ELTs in the field. The Aviation Division responded to over 400 non-distress ELTs last year. These are false alarms where units have accidentally been turned on, corrosion has shorted the switch, or the unit simply failed. Each and every ELT signal must be traced down, identified, and silenced to ensure there is not a crashed aircraft on the other end.

ELT maintenance used to be simple. Your mechanic would look at the battery expiration date during the annual. If the battery was out of date, you had to buy a new one. That was it.

A review of national data (Air Force Rescue Coordination Center) for 1992 shows that the false alarm rate on ELTs is 97%. That means out of every 100 ELT signals in America, 97 are false alarms. Only 3% reflect true emergencies.

Another scary statistic from that same study is that the ELT only worked in approximately 25% of the crashes. There were a variety of reasons. For instance, if the aircraft hits the side of the mountain in a high cruise, the ELT will not survive. If there is post crash fire, the ELT will burn and cease working. However, in most of the cases, ELTs do not activate because they are defective—no battery, shorted out, or simply don't work.

Approximately 10 years ago the Avionics Association of Alaska, in cooperation with the FAA, urged everyone to bring their airplane in for an ELT check. No penalties would be issued by the FAA. The result? Fully 50% of the aircraft tested had defective ELTs.

In an emergency off-field landing situation a defective ELT is about as useful as a boat anchor to a drowning man. The problem is we all fly around believing that the ELT in the back is the solution. It is an asset only if it works.

Recently the FAA recognized some of these problems. The result is that an ELT now must be tested once a year. FAR 91.217 requires a test of the G-switch, the mounting, and the antenna of your ELT. Remember, if the ELT is functional, it may help save your life. If it is not functional, it is useless.

ELTs installed today must meet new, more stringent requirements as established by TSO C-91a. The newer ELTs have a more stringent frequency tolerance of .005% (to ensure the signal can be heard by one of the SRSAT satellites). Also the G switch must activate with a deceleration of 3.5 feet per second and a stronger heavy duty airframe mount is required. The TSO also mandates a remote switch in the cockpit.

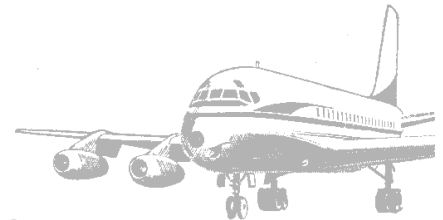
If your old ELT (pre TSO C-91a) is defective you will be required, in most cases, to update to the newer standard. Because of the remote switch requirement, additional wiring must be run to the front cockpit.

When the ELT functions as designed, it is a tremendous asset to search and rescue. It will certainly speed up the SAR volunteers arriving at the scene. If it doesn't work, then it's just so much extra weight.

One last note. Please try to listen to 121.5 as often as you can. If you hear an ELT, advise either air traffic control or Flight Service. When you shut down after a great flight spend a moment listening to 121.5 to make sure your ELT did not accidentally activate. 

# Funding Approved

The Montana Aeronautics Board has approved funding to obtain necessary runway survey data needed by the FAA to create GPS Instrument Approach procedures at the Polson and Scobey airports. Financing for this project will be obtained from the "Aeronautics Airport Development Financial Assistance Program" (ADFP). This is the first step in a long process to build a GPS approach. Obtaining this data will save these communities approximately \$1500.



## GA Statistical Databook Available

The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) has released the 1997 *General Aviation Statistical Databook*, a comprehensive guide to statistical information regarding the general aviation industry.

The Databook offers up-to-date information provided by the FAA on GA, air taxi activity and forecasts. This information is combined with GAMA's intensive statistical research into domestic general aviation shipments, composition of the aircraft fleet, exports and aviation safety trends. It also includes logistical data on the number of hours flown by GA aircraft, categorized by type and primary use, as well as documentation on the US pilot population and US airports.

To obtain a copy, please send \$10 to GAMA, 1400 K Street NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20005-2485 or contact at web site, [www.generalaviation.org](http://www.generalaviation.org).

# World War II Glider Pilots Gather in Flathead

Latter-day barnstormers is too grandiose a term for them, say the World War II glider pilots who assembled in the Flathead in late June.

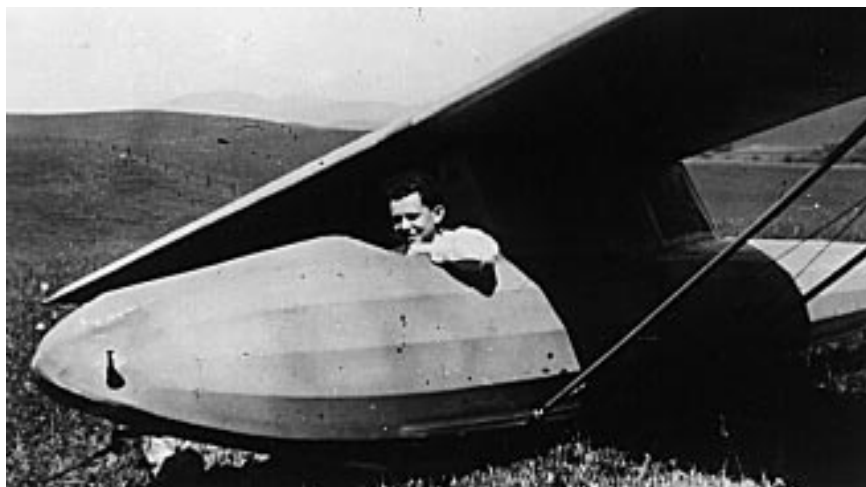
They came at the invitation of Al Jennings of Bigfork, a glider pilot who keeps in touch with all the old, bold pilots of his youth—and keeps his Cessna 170 ready to go beside the plane he's building.

"During the war, a lot of people hung on to the idea that we were suicide pilots, so we were an unruly bunch, and rules and regulations didn't mean a lot to us. So what if they're going to court martial us, we couldn't care less," said Al Jennings.

Twenty-seven pilots of this ilk arrived in Bigfork for the regional reunion. Probably a third of the 6,000 glider pilots trained for war duty are still living, and a little more than a thousand belong to the national association.

One pilot attending was 84-year-old Henry Beadle of Novato, CA. Henry arrived in his home-built Mustang II which he completed 18 years ago. He has logged over 1500, hours traveling at an average cruising speed of 170 MPH.

Henry is one of those fortunate individuals blessed with excellent physical and mental health and he loves to fly as much today as he did when he first learned to fly cargo gliders in the U.S. Army Air Corps during WWII.



*Al Jennings in cockpit of homemade secondary glider he helped build. The picture was taken in 1933 after his first flight which was a solo at age 13.*

Henry received his early glider training at Fort Morgan, CO, and 29 Palms, CA, graduating from advance glider training at Lubbock, TX, in 1944. He received the coveted Silver Army Pilot Wings with a letter "G" (for glider) embossed on the center shield.

Shortly after the start of the Korean War, Henry offered his services to his country once again, enlisting in the U.S. Air Force. The glider pilot classification was obsolete so Henry joined using his sec-

ondary military specialty or aircraft mechanic. Henry served as a crew chief and flew thousands of hours in a variety of multi-engined aircraft. He retired in 1960 after 20 plus years of active service.

Henry has flown his Mustang over most of the Continental US and into Mexico.

This was the second time in three years that Henry flew his Mustang to Kalispell. The gathering of the WWII glider pilots was to commemorate D-Day—June 6, 1944.



*Henry Beadle with home built Mustang II airplane which was built in his garage over a 7-year period. Cruise speed is 170 MPH at 2400 RPM using a 150 HP Lycoming engine.*



# **The Montana Aeronautics Division Search and Rescue System**

By: Jeanne Lesnik, *Montana Aeronautics State Search Coordinator*

During travels around the state, the division has had requests for an update on the Montana air search system.

The state of Montana has an agreement with the United States Air Force Rescue Coordination Center which states: The Montana State Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division is the state agency responsible for air search for missing aircraft within the state of Montana. This responsibility exists twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The county sheriff is responsible for missing persons in his county and has authority over the ground search operations.

The Montana Aeronautics Division utilizes a volunteer search system divided into 14 search districts with a volunteer search coordinator and co-coordinator in each district. Volunteer pilots and aircraft are listed in each district. To be a volunteer pilot, a pilot must be registered in the state of Montana and volunteer each year on the pilot registration form. An observer does not need to be a pilot. The aircraft used also must be registered in the state of Montana. High wing aircraft are used for grid search

and aircraft equipped with emergency locating equipment (ELT) are used for an ELT search.

Each year Montana Aeronautics hosts a mountain search pilot clinic; all registered volunteers receive an application to attend. The clinic is held in Kalispell, in September. The topics covered include; two hours of mountain dual utilizing the national grid system, the search system, the observer program, mountain flying techniques, survival training, ELT homing training and emergency landing training.

In mountainous terrain and marginal weather conditions it is important to consider and use both an experienced pilot and an aircraft with capabilities to match the conditions of the search. The mountain search pilot clinic addresses these situations.

The Aeronautics Division provides Workers Compensation Insurance for volunteers. Each volunteer must provide his or her social security number and Montana pilot and aircraft registration numbers. The division reimburses aircraft fuel and oil for the search aircraft. This must be done through the search coordinator.

## **What does a pilot bring with him or her to a search base?**

1. A pilot should be familiar with the national grid system for search, and bring a current sectional. "The Montana Atlas & Gazetteer, Topo Maps" of the entire state, is a great additional aide for search.
2. Both the pilot and the airplane must be currently registered in the State of Montana.
3. Both the pilot and the airplane should be ready to go with fuel and oil for the aircraft. A survival pack for the pilot and the observer, with proper warm clothing and food provisions for the day's search.
4. A good team for search is two pilots who can fly and communicate well together, sharing observer and pilot skills. An ideal situation would be for the pilot to bring all of the above to the search base.

If you have further questions or comments, please feel free to contact Jeanne Lesnik, Montana Aeronautics, at 406/444-2506.

## **Bass Father's Day Pancake Breakfast**



*Beacon Star Airstrip was the site of the annual Father's Day Pancake Breakfast. Many aircraft brought hungry folks to the Frank Bass residence to enjoy the poorboy sourdough pancake breakfast cooked up by Frank and Patty Bass and their helpers. Thanks for a great outing.*

# House Aviation Leaders Recommend Relief

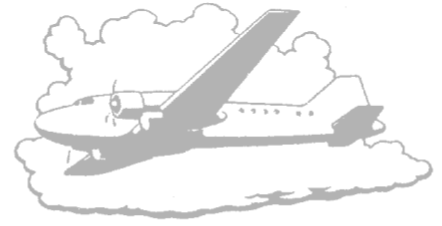
Congress endorsed relief for Part 135 operators from the requirements to obtain records prior to hiring a pilot.

This guidance from the House Aviation Subcommittee directs the FAA to provide flexible interpretation of the requirements to obtain records, as mandated by the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996, for on-demand operators. Currently all air carriers are required to obtain FAA, National Driver Register, and previous/current employer records prior to hiring any pilot.

The letter, sent to FAA Acting Administrator Barry Valentine by House Aviation Subcommittee Chairman John Duncan (R-TN) and Ranking Democrat William Lipinski (D-IL), specifically stated that the

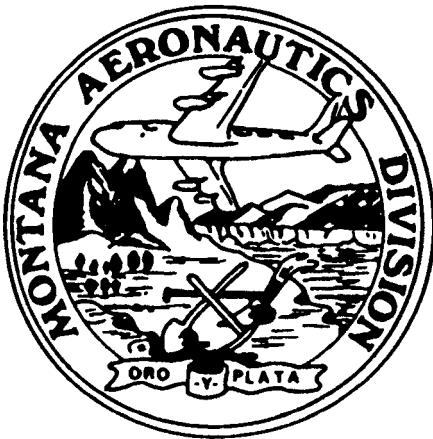
“small aviation businesses that provide on-demand air services were not the focus of Congressional concern” when drafting the pilot record sharing legislation. The subcommittee leadership further explained that the most significant safety contributions these companies could make is obtaining the records from the current or most recent employer. Most importantly, Congress acknowledged the unique operating environment of Part 135 air charter and suggested that the FAA allow on-demand operators to hire pilots on an interim basis while awaiting receipt of pilot records.

The Subcommittee sent the letter to Acting Administrator Barry Valentine.



Thirty-two hundred copies of this public document were produced at an estimated cost of 27¢ each, for a total cost of \$864. This includes \$120 for production, \$526 for postage and \$220 for printing.

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**July 1997**

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